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COVID19: Stay Informed

COVID19: STAY INFORMED

1 December 2021



STAY INFORMED: COVID19

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Our Embassy and Consulates are doing all that we can to provide essential support to Australians in the United States. Please monitor this page, our <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Twitter</u> channels, and the Smartraveller website and social media channels, for updates.

For **urgent** consular assistance contact:

- +61 2 6261 3305 from overseas
- 1300 555 135 from within Australia

For **non-urgent** enquiries, complete the Smartraveller contact form here

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INFORMATION FOR AUSTRALIANS RETURNING TO AUSTRALIA

Returning to Australia

The Australian Government has implemented plans to safely reopen Australia's international borders and assist Australians, permanent residents and their immediate family members to return from overseas.

Further easing of restrictions and reopening of borders will be done in a staged and careful manner as vaccination rates in Australia hit target thresholds. Additional information will be provided here and via our social media channels as it becomes available.

To enter Australia, the following criteria must be met. Each traveller must:

1. Be an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident or an eligible immediate family member of an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident who has been granted an exemption to travel (see below) or meet one of the other exemption criteria (see below).

AND

2. Be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with a <u>recognised vaccine</u> if aged 12 years or older or if not fully vaccinated and aged 12 or older, undertake mandatory 14 days quarantine at a Government arranged quarantine facility.

AND

3. Provide a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours of boarding a flight to Australia if aged 5 years or older.

AND

4. Complete an online Australian Travel Declaration at least 72 hours prior to departure.

AND

5. Wear a face mask during the flight and in airports if aged 12 years or older.

AND

6. Comply with any quarantine and/or self-isolation and testing requirements upon arrival in Australia. (You may be eligible for reduced quarantine requirements when you return to Australia depending on the state or territory to which you are travelling, see State or Territory government information here .)

Read more about Australia's re-entry measures

Read about the additional border security measures to protect Australians from the new 'Omicron' COVID-19 variant.

Travel to NSW, ACT and VIC

The NSW, ACT and Victorian Governments allow entry to Australian citizens, permanent residents and immediate family (including the parents of citizens and permanent residents) returning from overseas without the need for mandatory hotel quarantine, providing they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with a vaccine approved or recognised by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) (see below). Travellers must:

- self-isolate for 72 hours upon arrival
- get a COVID-19 PCR test (polymerase chain reaction test) within 24 hours of arrival
- get a further PCR test 5-7 days after arrival, depending on which state you are in.

Please visit <u>International travel (australia.gov.au)</u> for further details on how to self-isolate, testing requirements, and what to do if you are not vaccinated.

Travel to other Australian States and Territories

As Australia transitions its response to COVID-19, it is anticipated that other states and territories will introduce similar or alternative arrangements for vaccinated and unvaccinated overseas arrivals.

Information on current quarantine arrangements in other Australian States and Territories can be found below.

Additional information will be provided here and via our social media channels as it becomes available.

Evidencing your overseas vaccination for international travel

Australian citizens, permanent residents and immediate family aged 12 years and over who were vaccinated overseas and who wish to return under these new arrangements will need to present foreign vaccination certificates, backed by a legally binding attestation of their vaccination status in the Australian Travel Declaration (see below). In all cases, foreign vaccination certificates will need to:

- be issued by a national (e.g. CDC) or state/provincial-level authority or an accredited vaccination provider;
- be in English or be accompanied by a certified translation;
- include at a minimum the traveller's name, as it appears in their passport, date of birth or passport number, the vaccine brand name, and the date of each dose or the date on which a full course of immunisation was completed. Note: If your vaccination certificate is in a different name to your passport, you must provide evidence of the change (e.g. marriage or name change certificate) or evidence you are the person named (e.g. driving licence or US Permanent Residence Card).

Paper and digital vaccination certificates will be equally acceptable.

Some airlines may have additional processes to verify vaccination status. Please contact your airline for further information.

For a traveller to qualify as fully vaccinated, the certificate must show a vaccine approved or recognised by Australia's TGA . Current approved and recognised vaccines and dosages are:

- Two doses at least 14 days apart of:
 - AstraZeneca (Vaxzevria)
 - AstraZeneca (COVISHIELD)
 - Pfizer/Biontech (Comirnaty)

- Moderna (Spikevax)
- Sinovac (Coronavac)
- BBIBP-CorV (Sinopharm) (for 18 to 60 year olds)
- Covaxin (Bharat Biotech)
- Or one dose of:
 - Janssen-Cilag COVID Vaccine.

Mixed doses count towards being fully vaccinated, as long as all vaccines are approved or recognised by the TGA.

A traveller will not be considered fully vaccinated unless at least 7 days have passed since the last dose of vaccine in a course of immunisation.

The TGA is continuing to evaluate other COVID-19 vaccines that may be recognised for the purposes of travel to Australia in future. Further information is available on the TGA website.

Evidencing your Australian vaccination for international travel

Australian citizens, permanent residents and immediate family who were vaccinated in Australia and/or who have already had their vaccination status recorded in the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) can download their International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) from the MyGov website.

Travellers eligible for the ICVC can use it immediately if they are already overseas.

From 1 November 2021, the International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate can also be used by eligible travellers leaving and re-entering Australia.

Pre-Departure testing and in-flight requirements

This information is provided as a guide and for information purposes only. Contact your airline to confirm your itinerary and travel plans and regarding requirements specific to your flight. Local authorities may have additional requirements in place for departures.

All passengers aged five and older travelling to Australia on flights departing the United States are required to return a negative COVID-19 PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test prior to departure. PCR tests are required even if you have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

PCR tests must be performed within 72 hours of departure from the United States.

In addition, passengers and crew on all international flights must wear a face mask during their flight and while in airports.

Masks are not required for children under 12 years of age and those with an official medical certificate stating why they cannot wear a mask.

Further information and FAQs regarding these requirements can be found on <u>Smartraveller</u> and the <u>Department of Health</u> website.

PCR testing is readily available in the United States, however the time it takes to receive results can vary depending upon your location and current testing demand. Some testing services are provided free of charge at health care centres and select pharmacies, others require insurance and/or payment at the time of service.

Further information on community-based testing sites is available on the <u>US Department of Health and Human Services website</u>. Contact your health care provider or your state or local public health department for more information.

Testing is also available through private providers such as Passport Health and Curative

Search engines such as https://testfortravel.com may help with identifying possible testing locations, but we recommend calling ahead to confirm that your chosen location provides PCR testing that meets
Australia's requirements
, availability and whether appointments are required, turnaround times and costs.

At-home tests and tests involving self-administered sample collection are NOT acceptable and DO NOT meet Australia's pre-departure testing requirements. The respiratory sample collection must be supervised and conducted by appropriately trained healthcare personnel at an authorised and/or accredited testing facility. This ensures that the specimen is of the highest possible quality and that test results are as accurate as possible.

None of the providers listed above are affiliated with the Embassy or Australian Consulates in the United States.

Returning Australian children

Under 12 years

All children aged under 12 count as fully vaccinated for travel purposes. If your child is aged 12 or over and has not been vaccinated, you may be required to quarantine upon arrival in Australia.

Ages 12-17 years

New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have agreed to apply an exemption for those Australians aged 12–17 to arrive from overseas who do not meet the criteria for fully vaccinated.

The affected adolescents will be required to undertake a test within 24 hours of arrival into Australia and quarantine at home for 7 days. A second test will be required on day 5 prior to completion of quarantine. They may attend school after completing 7 days home quarantine. Additionally, 12–17 year olds not fully

vaccinated will not be allowed to visit other high risk settings such as disability facilities, aged-care residential facilities and hospitals until 14 days after arrival. This exemption will support safe reopening of international borders whilst ensuring Australian families with children, in countries with different vaccine eligibility settings or without a recognised or approved vaccine, can return to Australia and remain with their families on immediate return. Read the statement from Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Paul Kelly, about Australian children returning from overseas

Travelling with non-Australian family

Since 20 March 2020 Australia has **NOT** allowed the entry of people who are not citizens, permanent residents or their families. Immediate family members of Australians and permanent residents who are not themselves Australian citizens or permanent residents must apply for an exemption to travel to Australia.

Detailed information about the exemptions is available on the Home Affairs website

The following are considered to be immediate family members:

- · spouses;
- de facto partners;
- dependent children; and
- legal guardians.

From 1 November 2021, the definition of 'immediate family member' will also include the parents of adult Australian citizens and permanent residents (to include biological parents, legal - including adoptive - parents, step-parents and parents-in-law). This is for the purpose of assessing exemptions to Australia's travel restrictions only.

A <u>web form</u> is available for family members to apply for an exemption. Proof of the family relationship should be provided as part of this request.

What does this mean? If you're an Australian citizen or permanent resident, you and your immediate family will be able to return to Australia. You'll still be subject to state and territory requirements, including managed quarantine (where applicable). If you're a foreign national visiting Australia, you'll still be allowed to depart Australia.

For additional Australian visa information in relation to COVID-19 please refer to our <u>Visas and Migration page</u> (https://usa.embassy.gov.au/visas)

Australian Travel Declaration

All travellers to Australia - including Australian citizens and permanent residents - should complete an Australia Travel Declaration online at least 72 hours prior to departure.

Airlines may request proof of completion at the time of check-in.

When completing the Declaration, you will be asked to provide your contact details in Australia, flight information, health status and requirements during quarantine (see below). This information helps the Australian Government determine your quarantine arrangements and enables health authorities to contact you if someone you travelled with tests positive for COVID-19.

For more information, visit https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/australia-travel-declaration

Available flights from the United States to Australia

Regular commercial flights are operating, but short-term availability remains limited. You may need to book well in advance to secure a seat(s) and be flexible with your dates, connections, airlines and destination in Australia. We recommend a flight search to find the option that works best for you.

We expect flight availability to further improve in the coming weeks, as more major carriers look to resume services.

Once you have secured flights, we encourage you to stay in regular contact with your airline or travel agent to confirm your travel plans, reservations, requirements, and that flights will be operating as advertised.

There are currently no plans for government-facilitated flights from the United States at this stage, as regular commercial options are still available.

If you need emergency consular assistance, contact our 24/7 Consular Emergency Centre + 61 2 6261 3305. For non-urgent enquiries, email smartraveller@dfat.gov.au (mailto:smartraveller@dfat.gov.au).

International Flight Arrivals: Quarantine arrangements

Quarantine Requirements

From 1 November 2021, Australian citizens, permanent residents and immediate family members who have been fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved or recognised by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) or are under the age of 12, may be eligible for reduced quarantine arrangements on arrival.

Quarantine requirements are managed and enforced by state and territory governments with Australian Government support. Travellers to Australia need to comply with the quarantine requirements in the state or territory of their arrival, and any other state or territories that they plan to travel to. Restrictions may change at short notice.

You may be eligible for reduced quarantine requirements when you return to Australia depending on the state or territory to which you are travelling. **See the latest quarantine costs and arrangements for each State or Territory government here** .

It is the travellers responsibility to ensure that they meet entry and quarantine arrangements for each state or territory that they intend to travel to. Travellers may be responsible for costs of quarantine if they arrive in a state or territory without meeting entry requirements.

Domestic travel within Australia

The most up-to-date information about entry conditions, forms and requirements for travel to, from and between Australian states and territories can be found on the websites of the respective state and territory governments (see below).

You can also check restrictions in all states and territories using the COVID-19 Restriction Checker

New South Wales:

COVID-19 advice

COVID-19: Border crossing information

• Queensland:

Queensland border restrictions

Apply for an entry pass

Queensland border restrictions fact sheet

• Western Australia:

Coronavirus COVID-19 state of emergency declarations

Victoria:

coronavirus.vic.gov.au

• Northern Territory:

coronavirus.nt.gov.au

• South Australia:

COVID-19

COVID-19 and primary industries

• Australian Capital Territory:

COVID-19 advice

Tasmania:

coronavirus.tas.gov.au

Returning to Australia with pets

The COVID-19 pandemic has not changed the risks posed by diseases of biosecurity concern to Australia or the need for cats and dogs to meet the import permit conditions in full. This includes the requirement for cats and dogs destine for the Post Entry Quarantine Facility (PEQ) at Mickleham to arrive directly into Melbourne International Airport wherever possible.

These import conditions protect Australia against exotic diseases.

The quarantine facility at Mickleham is fully operational and is continuing to take booking requests. Pet importers and agents are advised to make flight arrangements and reservations at the quarantine facility promptly after their import permit is approved.

This information is subject to change.

Read the latest guidance on pet imports here: www.agriculture.gov.au/cats-dogs

Read the latest <u>Industry Advice Notice</u> (dated 8 January 2021) on PEQ Reservation Waiting

Periods here: https://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/industry-advice/2021/01-2021

INFORMATION FOR AUSTRALIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

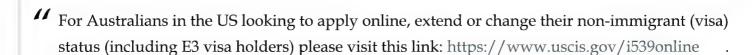
US visas

All enquiries about US visas and your status in the US should be directed to the relevant US authorities.

If you are in Australia, please contact the <u>US Embassy in Canberra</u>, or one of the US Consulates in Sydney, Perth or Melbourne.

If you are already in the US, please contact the <u>US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)</u> on +1 800 375 5283, or the Department of State's Visa Services on +1 202 485 7600.

We would also encourage you to consult your employer or sponsor and speak with an immigration attorney to see what options may be available to you.



If you can't contact USCIS and are delayed beyond your departure date (e.g. due to airline cancellations or you are unable to apply to USCIS to extend your stay because USCIS offices are closed) you should keep documentation in order to present to US authorities in future should the need arise, and seek the advice of a migration lawyer.

If you are in possession of a current E3 visa that is due to expire you may apply for a 240 day extension. More information is available here https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-covid-19 - under tab "Extension of Stay/Change of Status".

"

ESTAS

ESTA travellers affected by COVID-19 restrictions may apply for an extended term of admission. <u>Please see</u> this announcement for further information .

If you are travelling in the United States under the Visa Waiver Program and are concerned about your status in country, contact the <u>US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)</u> on +1 800 375 5283.

You can also speak with an immigration attorney to see what options may be available to you.

Suspension of mail services into Australia

USPS International Mail Service Suspensions

The United States Postal Service™ is temporarily suspending international mail acceptance for certain destinations due to impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic and other unrelated service disruptions. Services to Australia are among those affected.

For further information and updates, visit: https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/international/.

INFORMATION FOR NON-AUSTRALIANS TRAVELLING TO AUSTRALIA DURING COVID-19

Travel exemptions

Australia's travel restrictions and exemptions

Australia's borders are currently closed and entry to Australia remains strictly controlled to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Travel to Australia is only available if you are automatically exempt or you have been granted an individual exemption based on a prescribed criteria. Please refer to the following link on the Department of Home Affairs website for more details about Australia's travel restrictions and the exemption process: https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/travel-restrictions

You need to apply for an exemption at least two weeks, but not more than two months, before your planned travel.

Note: The visa decision and the travel exemption decision are **two separate decisions** and you will be notified in writing separately for each. In general, an assessment on your visa application will not commence until you have been granted an individual exemption or you are in an exempt category of persons.

Travel Exemption Portal

Apply online for a travel exemption online: https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep

Parents of adult Australian citizens and permanent residents

From 1 November 2021, the definition of 'immediate family member' will include the parents of adult Australian citizens and permanent residents. This is for the purpose of assessing exemptions to Australia's travel restrictions only.

The definition of parents of Australian citizens and permanent residents includes:

- biological parents
- legal (including adoptive) parents
- step-parents
- parents in-law.

Before you can travel, you will need to have your relationship with your adult Australian child confirmed by submitting a travel exemption request. You must submit your request through the Travel Exemption
Portal

. Select the category 'I am an immediate family member' and then 'parent of adult Australian citizen or permanent resident'.

You will need to provide evidence of:

- your adult child's Australian citizenship or permanent residency; and
- your parental relationship to the Australian citizen or permanent resident.

Refer to 'Examples of evidence that you can provide' for more information, here

Visa Options

Details of all visas available can be found on the <u>Department of Home Affairs Website</u>: Applying for a Visa .

Common visas used for travel from the United States to Australia:

Travelling to Australia to visit family or friends for 'business visitor activities

You cannot apply for an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) online, or through an airline or travel agent at this time.

The Department of Home Affairs is trialling a mobile app (AustralianETA) for certain passport holders to apply for an ETA while the travel restrictions are in place.

You can use AustralianETA to apply for an ETA if:

- you meet all ETA eligibility requirements , and
- you hold a passport from Brunei, Canada, Hong Kong (SAR of China), Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea or the United States of America.
 - Note: There is a non-refundable service fee of AUD20 to apply for an ETA using AustralianETA. An ETA does not allow you to work in Australia, or stay longer than three months.
 - You can download AustralianETA for free from the App Store (Apple) or Google Play store
 (Android) . Travellers not included in the AustralianETA trial can apply online through
 ImmiAccount for another visa that may suit their needs. (Please ensure you familiarise
 yourself with all of the visa eligibility requirements that need to be met before you lodge an
 application.)
- European passport holders might be eligible for an eVisitor (subclass 651) visa. There is no Visa Application Charge (VAC) or service fee for an eVisitor visa application.
- Other passport holders might be eligible for a <u>Visitor (subclass 600)</u> visa in the relevant stream.

If you are granted an ETA, eVisitor or Visitor visa this does not mean you have been considered for or granted an exemption to travel to Australia. You still need to apply for a travel exemption and provide evidence to support your claims, unless you are travelling within the Safe Travel Zone . https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-finder/work

Sponsored Parent visa (Temporary) (subclass 870)

This temporary visa lets a parent of an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or eligible New Zealand citizen, visit Australia for up to 3 or 5 years. For further details and how to apply see https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/sponsored-parent-temporary-
Note: This particular type of visa has a longer processing time and applies a different legislative definition of immediate family member under the Migration Regulations 1994. Migration Regulations 1994 (legislation.gov.au)

An individual with a pending sponsored parent visa is not precluded from applying for one of the temporary visas listed above.

Australia Travel Declaration

All travellers to Australia - including Australian citizens and permanent residents - should complete an Australia Travel Declaration online at least 72 hours prior to departure.

Airlines may request proof of completion at the time of check-in.

When completing the Declaration, you will be asked to provide your contact details in Australia, flight information, health status and requirements during quarantine (see below). This information helps the Australian Government determine your quarantine arrangements and enables health authorities to contact you if someone you travelled with tests positive for COVID-19.

INFORMATION FOR EMBASSY VISITORS, INCLUDING CONSULAR AND PASSPORT CLIENTS

Embassy and Consulate visitors

The Embassy and Consulates are taking special precautions to protect visitors and staff. This includes daily cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, such as tables, countertops, light switches, door handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

All members of the public who enter our Embassy and Consulates **must wear a face covering** during the time of their visit.

Please note that our gallery is temporarily closed until further notice.

Consular, passport and notarial services (see below) are currently by appointment only.

Consular and Passport clients

The Embassy and Consulates remain open for consular, passport and notarial services. **All in-person services are by appointment only.**

Appointment availability varies by location.

Please visit our Where To Apply page (https://usa.embassy.gov.au/passport-locations) for details on where you can make an appointment and find details of requirements to attend in-person passport interviews.

You can find answers to frequently asked questions and further guidance here: Applying for a passport during COVID-19. (https://usa.embassy.gov.au/passport-applications-during-covid-19)

(https://www.facebook.com/AusInTheUS)

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(https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEoD8gsW65cF78Cx5NSXd6Q)

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